

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 STOCKHOLM 00222

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IT, SW

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITH PRIME MINISTER PALME OF SOCIALIST MEETING
IN DENMARK - JANUARY 18-19

REF: (A) STATE 7807, (B) STATE 8874

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. IN HOUR LONG CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER PALME, I RELAYED USG CONCERN OVER DEVELOPMENTS IN PORTUGAL, SPAIN AND ITALY, AS WELL AS THE GENERAL QUESTION OF COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN WESTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS. I SAID I HOPED HE WOULD USE HIS INFLUENCE TO OPPOSE ANY EFFORT AT HELSINGOR MEETING TO GIVE SANCTION TO SOCIALIST COOPERATION WITH WEST EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES, EITHER AS A GENERAL THESIS OR IN THE SPECIFIC CONTEXTS OF SPAIN, ITALY OR PORTUGAL. PRIME MINISTER REPLIED THAT HE IS CERTAIN NO RESOLUTION EITHER FOR OR AGAINST SUCH COLLABORATION WOULD BE PROPOSED, SINCE IT WOULD SPLIT MEETING. I ALSO EMPHASIZED RISKS INVOLVED IN SOARES' PROPOSAL FOR MEETING OF SOUTHERN EUROPEAN COMMUNIST AND SOCIALIST PARTIES, BUT PALME DID NOT COMMIT HIMSELF ON THIS ISSUE. I BELIEVE MY INTERVENTION HAS BEEN AT LEAST PARTIALLY SUCCESSFUL, FOR PALME IS NOW FULLY AWARE OF DAMAGE WHICH COULD RESULT TO U.S. - EUROPEAN RELATIONS FROM GAINS BY COMMUNISTS. I ALSO DO NOT RPT NOT BELIEVE HE WILL TAKE INITIATIVE IN URGING COMMUNIST-SOCIALIST COLLABORATION, PARTICULARLY SINCE HE IS CONVINCED THAT TO DO SO WOULD DIVIDE EUROPEAN SOCIALIST PARTIES. END SUMMARY.

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2. I CALLED ON SWEDISH PRIME MINISTER PALME JANUARY 15 TO RELAY U.S. CONCERNS OVER DEVELOPMENTS IN PORTUGAL, SPAIN AND ITALY AS WELL AS GENERAL QUESTION OF COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN WESTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS. DRAWING ON DEPARTMENT'S COMPREHENSIVE

BRIEF, I STATED TO PRIME MINISTER OUR VIEWS CONTAINED IN REF B.

3. FOLLOWING MY PRESENTATION, PM SAID HE AGREED WITH OUR VIEWS ON WEAKNESS OF COMMUNIST PARTIES IN SOUTHERN EUROPE, A WEAKNESS WHICH HAS COMPELLED THEM TO SEEK TO ADDRESS THEMSELVES TO EXIGENCIES OF LOCAL SCENE. AS PALME SEES IT, COMMUNISTS IN THESE COUNTRIES, AS WELL AS IN FRANCE, HAVE LONG LIVED IN A "POLITICAL GHETTO" WHICH THEY SEEK DESPARATELY TO LEAVE. HOWEVER, PM SAID HE DID NOT FEEL HE COULD SPEAK WITH ANY AUTHORITY ABOUT ITALY (WHERE HE HAS NOT BEEN SINCE HIS HONEYMOON), NOR COULD HE CLAIM FIRST HAND INSIGHT INTO SPANISH SITUATION.

4. IN EACH OF THE SOUTHERN COUNTRIES, PM CONTINUED, RELATIONSHIP OF CP'S TO SOCIALIST PARTIES IS DIFFERENT. ONE FACTOR, HE SAID, STANDS OUT IN THOSE CASES WHERE SOCIALISTS HAVE ENTERED PARTNERSHIP WITH COMMUNISTS: THE COMMUNISTS HAVE LOST VOTES WHILE THE SOCIALISTS HAVE GAINED. IN FRANCE, THE SOCIALIST PARTY THAT HAD BEEN A "REGRESSIVE" PARTY CONSISTING OF SCHOOL TEACHERS, MEMBERS OF PROFESSIONS AND THE BUREAUCRACY; UNDER MITTERAND IT HAS NOW GAINED NATIONAL STATURE, MOSTLY AT THE EXPENSE OF COMMUNISTS. THE SAME HOLDS TRUE IN FINLAND, WHERE SINCE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS ESTABLISHED WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMUNIST PARTY, LATTER HAS NOT ONLY LOST STRENGTH BUT HAS PLIT.

5. PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT ULTIMATE TEST OF INTENTION OF COMMUNIST PARTIES IN ITALY, FRANCE, SPAIN AND PORTUGAL IS EXTENT TO WHICH THEY ARE PREPARED TO ABANDON BASIC "TENETS" OF COMMUNISM, WHICH HE DEFINED AS (A) PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM (I.E., LOYALTY TO THE USSR), (B) DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT, (C) DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM AND (D) ELITISM. I INTERJECTED THAT IF THE COMMUNISTS WERE TO ABANDON THESE GOALS, THEY WOULD CEASE TO BE COMMUNIST PARTIES. PALME DID NOT DEMUR.

6. CONTINUING PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT, WHILE HE IS IN GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH OUR VIEW OF DANGERS OF COMMUNIST PARTY
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ENTRANCE INTO COALITION GOVERNMENTS, THERE IS NO EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE SHOWING THAT A COMMUNIST PARTY WHICH GAINED POWER THROUGH PARLIAMENTARY MEANS WOULD SUBVERT THAT GOVERNMENT WITHOUT HELP OF SOVIET ARMY, AS HAD HAPPENED IN CASE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA. I REPLIED THAT RECORD OF LAST 60 YEARS DOES NOT ENCOURAGE HYPOTHESIS THAT A COMMUNIST PARTY WHICH GAINS POWER EVEN WITHOUT HELP OF SOVIET ARMS, WOULD BE WILLING TO SURRENDER POWER ONCE IT HAD GAINED CONTROL OF SUFFICIENT LEVERS OF POWER. MOREOVER, I CONTINUED, IT IS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN THAT A CP WHICH GAINED POWER IN WESTERN EUROPE THROUGH PROPAGATION OF A "SOFT BRAND" OF COMMUNISM (I.E. "COMMUNISM FOR CAPITALISTIC SOCIALIST SOCIETIES") WOULD HOLD THIS LINE IF THE FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES OF THE SOVIET UNION WERE TO SHIFT, AS FOR EXAMPLE, HAD HAPPENED AT

THE TIME OF THE NAZI-SOVIE PACT. AGAIN THE PRIME MINISTER DID NOT TAKE EXCEPTION.

7. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE THOUGH THAT WHILE CONDITIONS IN SOUTHERN EUROPE ARE VOLATILE, THE SITUATION IN EASTERN EUROPE IS FAR FROM STABLE. SITUATION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, HE SAID IS "ROTTEN". THE SOVIETS HAVE ENOUGH ON THEIR HANDS TRYING TO KEEP CONTROL OF EASTERN EUROPE, AND THEY SEEM WHOLLY UNABLE TO ACHIEVE A CONSENSUS AMONG THE COMMUNIST PARTIES OF EUROPE. IN FACT, PRIME MINISTER CONTINUED, THE SOVIET HOLD ON THE COMMUNIST PARTIES OF WESTERN EUROPE HAS BEEN LOOSENEED BY INCREASINGLY INDEPENDENT LINE OF THOSE PARTIES.

8. I REMARKED THAT IF COMMUNIST PARTIES OF WESTERN EUROPE ENTERED COALITION GOVERNMENTS, THE USSR WOULD BE FURNISHED WITH POWERFUL ARGUMENT FOR MAINTAINING CONTROL OF EASTERN EUROPE, SINCE SOVIETS COULD CLAIM TO EE GOVERNMENTS THAT, SINCE WESTERN EUROPE IS MOVING CLOSER TO COMMUNISM, THERE ARE NO GROUNDS FOR EE COUNTRIES TO MOVE AWAY FROM IT. FURTHERMORE, THE TEMPTATION TO THE SOVIETS TO MEDDLE IN WESTERN EUROPE MIGHT BE IRRESISTIBLE.

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